

Kick off to *everyone belongs* week
Monday, October 6, 2003

- Hello everyone, my name is Patty Morris and I am the Executive Director for the Developmental Disabilities Resource Centre of Calgary or DDRC for short
- Thank you for taking the time to come down today and support the kick off to everyone belongs week
- I want to thank Mayor Bronconnier for proclaiming this week *everyone belongs* week and for supporting us in this important initiative
- *everyone belongs* is a public awareness campaign aimed at promoting diversity and inclusion of all our citizens in this city in all areas of life
- Together with our partners and supporters which include EnCana, the Kahanoff Foundation, Volunteer Calgary, the United Way, Alberta Association for Community Living, the Calgary Stampede, VRII, the Canadian Down Syndrome Society, and many others,
- we are working together to promote our belief that our communities are more vibrant, healthy, safe, strong, and satisfying when all people, regardless of disability, ethnocultural background, age, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic class are truly welcome and able to participate and contribute in the ordinary things of life and in regular and existing settings.
- Through this campaign we want to change people's minds, attitudes, and behaviours about people who may be perceived as "different" and to demonstrate that community is better when everyone is included.
- We believe it at DDRC and we want the entire city to also believe it and know it from their own experiences
- While DDRC is encouraged by the progress being made toward the creation of truly inclusive communities, we are also aware of the substantial work still to be done in a variety of areas in order to achieve inclusive communities for everyone.
- For the ambitions of people with developmental disabilities to be realized, much has to change – personal beliefs, attitudes, behavior, formal systems, and government policies.
- This is what everyone belongs is aimed to do...create change so everyone truly does belong.

- For more information about this campaign, I encourage you to contact us at DDRC or visit the campaign website at www.everyonebelongs.com.
- Thank you again for your support.